

FMCS Mission



Promoting the development of sound and stable labor-management relations,

Preventing or minimizing work stoppages by assisting labor and management in settling their disputes through mediation,

Advocating collective bargaining, mediation and voluntary arbitration as the preferred processes for settling issues between employers and representatives of employees,

Developing the art, science and practice of conflict resolution, and

Fostering the establishment and maintenance of constructive joint processes to improve labor-management relationships, employment security and organizational effectiveness.

Group Problem Solving and Decision Making Tools



Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
2100 K Street NW • Washington DC 20427

Phone: 202-606-8100

Fax: 202-606-4251

Web Site: <http://tags.fmcs.gov>

E-mail: TAGS@fmcs.gov



About FMCS

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service is a unique agency of the U.S. Government, created by Congress more than 50 years ago to help prevent, manage and resolve conflict. Today, this mission is accomplished by a cadre of nearly 200 full-time federal mediators, who operate from more than 70 field offices strategically located throughout the country.

The primary focus of FMCS work is mediating contract negotiation disputes between employers and the unions that represent their employees. FMCS helps employers and unions achieve the related goals of profits and jobs, and thereby contributes to the strength of the economy.

FMCS offers a wide range of custom-designed services and training workshops. FMCS helps employers and unions improve workplace relationships and more effectively work together on issues of mutual interest.

The fastest growing aspects of FMCS work include consulting, systems design, education/training, facilitation and convening, mediating EEO and other workplace disputes, regulatory negotiations, non-workplace mediation, environmental disputes and international cases.



Applications

TAGS can be highly effective in:

- Interest based negotiations
- Traditional bargaining
- Surveys via the Internet
- Strategic planning
- Remote meetings
- Collaborative processes, like labor-management committees and partnership initiatives

TAGS can also improve FMCS delivery of complex alternative dispute resolution services such as negotiated rulemaking and the mediation of public policy disputes, especially when used to bring large groups of people together via the Internet.

Youth Violence Prevention

Building on our Congressionally authorized Peer Mediation Project, FMCS developed a special version of TAGS to help communities address school violence issues. It offers young people, parents, school and community leaders an important tool to more effectively meet the challenge of school and community violence.

TAGS System...

is a powerful network of computers and customized software that skilled FMCS mediators use to help groups:

- Solve problems more effectively,
- Make better decisions,
- Implement decisions more successfully,
- Conduct successful remote meetings, and
- Conduct surveys from anyplace your browser can connect you to the Internet,

often in far less time than with conventional methods.

Benefits

FMCS customers who use TAGS can expect to conduct shorter, more productive, problem-focused meetings. TAGS helps participants engage more openly & honestly, share knowledge & opinions more constructively, generate better ideas and build stronger commitment to joint action. It is designed to help minimize the impact of geographic separation and minimize transaction costs associated with group decision-making.

How TAGS System Works

On the Internet

Think of TAGS as a virtual conference center. Participants enter a TAGS conference by clicking a link in an e-mail message, or by entering their user ID and password at the TAGS Web site, <http://tags.fmcs.gov>.

Participants can go directly to a prescribed topic or enter a secure, virtual conference room and select a topic. The topic could be a “live” remote meeting, a survey, an asynchronous brainstorming session, an opportunity to assess ideas, a chance to view results, an action planning session or one of several other online TAGS functions. In some cases, participants can complete entire tasks online that used to require multiple face-to-face meetings. At other times, the online work is designed to shorten and better focus the time spent face-to-face.

Face-to-Face Meetings

In a well-run traditional meeting, participants individually voice ideas while a facilitator tries to capture them on a flip chart, one-by-one.

In a TAGS meeting, participants simultaneously contribute ideas with our easy-to-use software on a network of computers. All ideas immediately post to an electronic flip chart displayed on each person’s computer and on a large screen at the front of the room. Participants build on others’ ideas and continue to offer new ideas in their own words and with complete anonymity.

Using a mixture of group discussion and TAGS tools, participants can categorize and prioritize ideas, use electronic “ballots” to anonymously indicate their level of support for each idea, view tabulated results on-screen, and discuss results in an effort to reach consensus.

This technology does not replace expert mediation skills and human interaction among participants in a face-to-face meeting. Instead, the mediator uses this technology to enhance participant interaction and outcome.

Once agreement is reached, participants can use TAGS to assign tasks with completion targets and implementation timelines. The mediator can print out complete meeting notes before participants leave the meeting and archive meeting data for future use (or shred the information to ensure confidentiality).